

## PRESS RELEASE

Series Creators of Oxford Reading Tree, Roderick Hunt MBE and Alex Brychta, receive the prestigious Outstanding Achievement Award in this year's Education Resources Awards

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Oxford University Press is delighted to announce that Roderick Hunt MBE and Alex Brychta, series creators of Oxford Reading Tree, have been awarded with the prestigious Outstanding Achievement Award at the 2009 Education Resources Awards. This award recognises years of dedication from the successful author and illustrator team who have helped literally millions of young children learn to read through their much-loved Biff, Chip and Kipper stories.

Roderick Hunt MBE and Alex Brychta have worked together full-time as a collaborative author/illustrator team for over 25 years creating, developing and responding to teachers' and children's needs to ensure that Oxford Reading Tree has become the UK's best loved and most widely-chosen infant reading programme. Used in over 80% of UK primary schools and in over 120 countries worldwide, *Oxford Reading Tree* has gone from strength to strength and has made learning to read an enjoyable experience for millions of young children. In total, Rod and Alex have written and illustrated over 300 Biff and Chip stories and teachers *still* request more. In tune with the latest pedagogy, their most recent titles, *Floppy's Phonics*, have enabled schools to incorporate synthetic phonics into their teaching with Oxford Reading Tree.

From the early days Roderick Hunt and Alex Brychta were working closely with teachers and advisers on the pedagogy, the early storylines, the structure, levelling and look and feel in order to get the series right. The very first packs of books (30 in all) were published in 1985. This series of books was ground-breaking in that it moved away from the traditional look-and-say schemes of the time and introduced children to exciting, bite-sized stories that they not only *could* read, but which they *wanted* to read.

From the word go, Rod identified that to be successful *Oxford Reading Tree* stories should be focused on experiences with which young children could relate and which would motivate them to read more. The central characters – *Biff*, *Chip*, *Kipper*, and *Floppy* the dog – were developed so that children themselves could draw them and easily replicate Alex's style. They have become 'real friends' to many children, as they eagerly follow them through their series of adventures, helping them master the skills of early literacy and develop a real enjoyment of reading.

Alex recognised the value of building in additional detail and humour into the stories – a real first for a reading scheme. His illustrations have brought each story and character to life adding new depths which support discussion, comprehension and enjoyment. These extremely detailed illustrations have become something of a trademark for *Oxford Reading Tree* and ‘fans’ of the Biff, Chip and Kipper stories search every page for fascinating details!

Rod’s background in has been invaluable in helping him to understand the challenges for young readers. He recognized the need to get the language and structure right and the finely progressive steps in levelling to help children build confidence and see themselves as real readers from the outset. This attribute has made Oxford Reading Tree’s levelling as widely recognised by user schools as book band levels.

Roderick Hunt, much-loved author of *Oxford Reading Tree*’s famous Biff, Chip and Kipper stories was recognised in the Birthday Honours list for 2008 with an MBE for his service to education – in particular to children’s literacy.

This years Education Resources Awards is testament to the fact that Oxford Reading Tree’s Biff, Chip and Kipper are loved as much today as they were when they were first introduced and these delightful stories continue to bring joy and success to children and teachers alike.

For more information about *Oxford Reading Tree*, or details of how to contact any of the following for an interview please do contact me:

- Roderick Hunt – Oxford Reading Tree Series Creator and author
- Alex Brychta– Oxford Reading Tree Series Creator and illustrator
- Ruth Readshaw – Primary Sales and Marketing Director, Oxford University Press

**Sophie Quarterman**, Senior Campaign Manager  
Education Division, Oxford University Press,  
Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, OX2 6DP

**Tel:** 01865 354962

**Fax:** 01865 353339

**Email:** [sophie.quarterman@oup.com](mailto:sophie.quarterman@oup.com)